

Message Text

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SUBJECT: DSP CONVENTION ADOPTS PROPOSAL FOR REFORMIST-CONSERVATIVE
COALITION GOVERNMENT

SUMMARY: AT FEBRUARY CONVENTION, DSP ADOPTED ACTION POLICY
WHICH INCLUDES PROPOSAL FOR REFORMIST-CONSERVATIVE COALITION
GOVERNMENT. THIS MARKED POLICY SHIFT SEEMS LIKELY TO CAUSE
PROBLEMS FOR DOMEI-DSP RELATIONSHIP AND TO GENERATE FURTHER
DISUNITY IN OPPOSITION CAMP. END SUMMARY.

1. DSP HELD ITS 19TH REGULAR CONVENTION FEBRUARY 17-19 IN
TOKYO. BOTH CHAIRMAN IKKO KASUGA AND SECGEN SABURO TSUKAMOTO
WERE REELECTED ALONG WITH VICE CHAIRMEN MASAO NAKAMURA AND
TADASHI KODAIRA. ONLY NOTEWORTHY PERSONNEL CHANGE WAS
ADDITON OF FORMER SECGEN RYOSAKU SASAKI AS THIRD VICE CHAIRMAN.
SASAKI, WHO RESIGNED IN 1973 FOR HEALTH REASONS AND TO ACCEPT
RESPONSIBILITY FOR EARLIER DSP ELECTION SETBACKS, IS FAVORITE
OF ANTI-KASUGA ELEMENTS IN PARTY. THEY SEE HIM AS RESTORING
CERTAIN AMOUNT OF COLOR AND VIGOR TO BASICALLY STODGY
LEADERSHIP LINEUP.

2. ALTHOUGH OTHERWISE ROUTINE AFFAIR, DSP CONVENTION
ATTRACTED MUCH ATTENTION THIS YEAR BECAUSE OF CONTROVERSIAL
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AND POTENTIALLY DEVISIVE ASPECTS OF NEW ACTION POLICY WHICH

IT APPROVED. FOLLOWING STANDARD FARE CRITICISM OF PAST LDP
PROGRMAS, OF CONSERVATIVES' FAILURE TO COPE WITH JAPAN'S
ECONOMIC ILLS AND OF EVILS OF "MONEY IS POWER" POLITICS,
ACTION POLICY THEN RECITES EVIDENCE OF CONTINUING LDP
ELECTORAL DECLINE. THIS DECLINE, IT SAYS, IS HARBINGER
OF LOSS OF LDP DIET MAJORITY, WHICH, IN TURNS, MEANS THAT
APPEARANCE OF COALITION GOVERNMENT IS NOT FAR DISTANT. SO
FAR, NOTHING NEW. BUT THEN COMES CONTENTIOUS POINT.
BECAUSE OF IDEOLOGICAL AND POLICY DIFFERENCES AMONG OPPOSITION
PARTIES, POLICY STATEMENT GOES ON, CREATION OF REFORMIST
COALITION TO REPLACE LDP REGIME IS IMPOSSIBLE. THEREFORE,
COLLAPSE OF LDP MAJORITY WILL OF NECESSITY PRODUCE "COALITION
OR COOOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP GOING BEYOND CONVENTIONAL FRAME-
WORK OF CONSERVATIVES OR REFORMISTS". IN SHORT, DSP
APPEARS TO CALL FOR SOME KIND OF CONSERVATIVE-REFORMIST
GRAND COALITION.

3. SINCE DSP HAS LONG ADVOCATED OPPOSITION TO BOTH LDP
AND JCP AND URGED EVENTUALCREATION OF JSP-KOMEITO-DSP
COALITION GOVERNMENT, NEW LINE REPRESENTS MAJOR POLICY
SHIFT. THEREFORE, EVEN BEFORE CONVENTION, RELEASE OF DRAFT
ACTON POLICY GENERATED LIVELY DISCUSSION IN PRESS AND
POLITICAL CIRCLES AS TO PRECISELY WHAT KIND OF COALITION
ARRANGEMENT DSP LEADERS NOW HAD IN MIND. IT ALSO PRODUCED
CRITICISM, BOTH IN AND OUT OF PARTY, TO EFFECT THAT NEW
LINE CONSTITUTED BETRAYAL OF REFORMIST IDEALS AND LENT
CREDENCE TO AGRUMENTS THAT DSP WAS LITTLE MORE THAT JUNIOR
PARTNER TO LDP. INCLOSED CONVENTION SESSIONS SOME DELEGATES
REPORTEDLY CHALLENGED PROPOSAL AS CONTRARY TO DEMOCRATIC
SOCIALIST PRINCIPLES, WHILE OTHERS, ACCEPTING NOTION OF
EVENTUAL COOPERATION WITH LDP, ARGUED THAT PROPOSAL WAS
PREMATURE AND TACTICALLY UNSOUND SINCE IT WOULD DENIGRATE
DSP'S REFORMIST IMAGE. CHAIRMAN KASUGA, ALREADY UNDER FIRE
FOR INVOLVING HIMSELF IN SUB-ROSA EFFORTS TO WORK OUT COALITION
ARRANGEMENTS WITH LDP ELEMENTS JUST BEFORE MIKI WAS NAMED
PRIME MINISTER, COUNTERED WITH PROTESTATIONS OF RESOLUTE
DEDICATION TO DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST PRINCIPLES. HE FINALLY
GAINED ACQUIESCEENCE OF PROTESTING DELEGATES (ALTHOUGH ISSUE
WAS NEVER REALLY IN DOUBT) WITH EXPLANATION THAT DSP
LEADERSHIP HAD NO SPECIFIC PLAN FOR COALITION WITH LDP
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PRESENTLY IN MIND.

4. ACCORDING TO INFORMED DSP STAFFER, NEW ACTION POLICY
WAS PERSONAL HANDIWORKOF CHAIRMAN KASUGA, AIDED BY SECGEN
TSUKAMOTO AND VICE CHAIRMAN KODAIRA. (OTHER SOURCES INDICATE
BROADER PARTICIPATION.) PUBLIC RELEASE OF DRAFT WITHOUT
REFERENCE TO CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, HE SAID, SUBSEQUENTLY
PRODUCED HEATED DEBATE IN THAT BODY BOTH ABOUT KASUGA'S

OPERATING STYLE AND WISDOM OF POLICY PROPOSAL. IN END, BOTH THERE AND IN CONVENTION, KASUGA'S DOMINANCE OF PARTY FINANCES AND ORGANIZATION, ESPECIALLY WITH ELECTIONS SOON AHEAD, MUTED SERIOUS PROTEST AND MADE APPROVAL FOREGONE CONCLUSION.

5. SAME STAFFER TOLD EMBOFF THAT, DESPITE AMBIGUOUS GLOSSES AT CONVENTION, THERE WAS NO DOUBT ABOUT KIND OF COALITION KASUGA HAD IN MIND. IT WAS LDP (NOT LDP SPLINTER) IN COMBINATION WITH DSP. REASONS WERE VERY SIMPLE: 1) IDEO-LOGICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY KASUGA FELT AT HOME WITH CONSERVATIVES AND UNCOMFORTABLE WITH LEFTISTS; 2) HE HAD ESTABLISHED FINANCIAL TIES WITH LDP; 3) HE WAS CONVINCED THAT LOSS OF LDP MAJORITY WAS REAL POSSIBILITY; 4) HE HAD ABANDONED HOPES OF COOPERATION WITH JSP, CONSIDERING IT FIRMLY DOMINATED BY LEFT-WING SHAKAISHUGI KYOKAI; AND 5) HE HAD CONCLUDED OVERT MOVE WOULD IMPROVE CHANCES FOR DSP TO EVENTUALLY PARTICIPATE IN GOVERNMENT AND SHARE IN LDP LANGESSE THROUGH BENEFITS FROM REORGANIZED KOKUMIN KYOKAI.

6. COMMENT: DESPITE ITS MEAGER DIET REPRESENTATION AND RECURRENT QUESTIONS ABOUT ITS VERY ABILITY TO SURVIVE FOR MUCH LONGER, DSP, BY ADOPTING NEW POLICY LINE, HAS FOR MOMENT CAPTURED SHARE OF JAPANESE POLITICAL SPOTLIGHT. WHILE SIGNIFICANCE SHOULD NOT BE OVERBLOWN, DSP MOVE DOES SEEM LIKELY TO EXERT INFLUENCE OF SOME IMPORTANCE.

7. MOST IMMEIDATE REPERCUSSIONS OF NEW ACTION POLICY WILL PROBABLY BE FELT IN DOMEI, DSP'S PRIMARY SUPPORT ORGANIZATION. AS IN PARTV PROPER, THERE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN DIVISION OF OPINION AMONG UNION OFFICIALS OVER ADVISABILITY OF PLAN WITH PREEPONDERANT FEELING RUNNING AGAINST IT. FOR TIME BEING, HOWEVER,, DOMEI SEEMS TO BE GOING ALONG WITH DSP LEADERSHIP.
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HOW FAR RANK AND FILE CAN GO IN SUPPORT OF APPARENT TILT TOWARD BUSINESS-ORIENTED LDP IS SERIOUS QUESTION. WHILE WE STILL DO NOT HAVE CLEAR PICTURE OF DOMEI THINKING, IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT KASUGA'S PLOY HAS PRODUCED STRAINS IN DSP-DOMEI RELATIONS AND COULD ALIENATE UNION MEN WHO IN PAST HAVE VOTED DSP TICKET.

8. CONSERVATIVE REACTION HAS BEEN NEGATIVE. LDP DIETMENT HAVE TOLD EMBOFF THAT DSP IS OF LITTLE CONSEQUENCE ANYWAY, BUT WHATEVER UTILITY IT DOES HAVE CAN BE BEST MAINTAINED BY RETENTION OF REFORMIST COLORATION AND COOPERATION WITH LDP ON CASE BY CASE BASIS. MOREOVER, THEY ARE IRRITATED BY DSP PREDICTION OF IMPENDING LDP COLLAPSE. REACTION THEY CONVEY IS THAT OF SOMEONE WHO FINDS UNWANTED BABY ON DOORSTEP.

9. IN OPPOSITION CAMP, NEW DSP POSTURE COULD HAVE
IMPORTANT IMPLICATIONS. FOR ONE THING IT WEAKENS POSITION
OF JSP RIGHT-WING ADVOCATES OF JSP-KOMEITO-DSP ALLIANCE. FOR
ANOTHER IT ADDS ONE MORE IMPEDIMENT TO OPPOSITION PARTY
ELECTORAL COOPERATION IN COMING LOCAL ELECTIONS. HOWEVER
ALL THIS PLAYS OUT IN WEEKS AND MONTHS AHEAD, DSP POLICY
SHIFT IS MOST DECISIVE BY ANY JAPANESE PARTY IN LONG TIME,
AND FOR THAT REASON ALONE IS NOTEWORTHY.

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